

REMARKS

The above amendments and these remarks are responsive to the Office Action issued on January 9, 2006. By this response, claims 1, 8, 10, 12-14 and 16 are amended. Claims 17-20 are newly presented. No new matter is added. Claims 1-20 are now active for examination.

The Office Action allowed claims 9 and 15. Claims 1-4, 6 and 12-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being unpatentable over Jitsukata et al. (6,169,940). Claims 5 and 7 stood rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Jitsukata in view of Taguchi et al. (5,304,980). The Examiner rejected claims 10 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Jitsukata in view of Barrett (5,331,561). Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Jitsukata in combination with Barrett and Taguchi. Claim 8 was objected to for depending from a rejected base claim.

It is respectfully submitted that the claim rejection are overcome and the objection is addressed in view of the amendments and/or remarks presented herein.

The Objection to Claim 8 Is Addressed

Claim 8 was objected to for depending from a rejected base claim, but the Examiner indicated that claim 8 would be allowable if it is rewritten into independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

By this Response, claim 8 is rewritten into independent form as suggested by the Examiner. It is believed that claim 8 is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of claim 8 is respectfully requested.

The Anticipation Rejection of Claims 1-4, 6 and 12-14 Is Overcome

Claims 1-4, 6 and 12-14 were rejected as being unpatentable over Jitsukata. By this Response, independent claims 1 and 12-14 are amended. Applicants submit that the anticipation rejection is overcome because Jitsukata cannot support a prima facie case of anticipation.

Claim 1, as amended, describes an information providing device installed in a leader vehicle that leads a follower vehicle. The device includes a state detector configured to detect a state change in the leader vehicle and output a detecting signal. The state change occurs in the leader vehicle when a driver of the leader vehicle provides an input to the vehicle, such as turning the steering wheel or activating a turning signal. A guidance generator is provided to prepare guidance to guide the follower vehicle in response to the detecting signal. The guidance includes a photographed image of a view ahead of the leader vehicle, and additionally, information of a state change of the leader vehicle is overlaid on the photographed image, such as direction arrow 603 in Fig. 5 showing the direction change of the leader vehicle. Appropriate support for the amendment can be found in, for instance, item 603 in Fig. 5 and related descriptions in the specification.

On the other hand, Jitsukata relates to an automatic driving system that controls the driving of the vehicle according to an indication of the driver's driving decision, such as turn right or go straight at an intersection. If the driver indicates that the vehicle should make a right turn at an intersection, the automatic driving system controls the vehicle to make the intended turn without the driver's intervention. See S9 and S10 in Fig. 3 and related descriptions in Jitsukata. The images acquired by Jitsukata's CCD are not used by the driver to follow a leader vehicle. Furthermore, Jitsukata fails to disclose that information of a state change of a leader

vehicle is overlaid on the photographed image of a view ahead of the leader vehicle, as described in claim 1.

Since Jitsukata fails to disclose “a guidance generator configured to prepare, in response to the detecting signal, the guidance to guide the follower vehicle, wherein the guidance includes a photographed image of a view ahead of the leader vehicle and information of the state change overlaid on the photographed image,” as described in claim 1, Jitsukata cannot support a prima facie case of anticipation. Consequently, the anticipation rejection base on Jitsukata is untenable and should be withdrawn. Favorable reconsideration of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-4 and 6, directly or indirectly, depend on claim 1 and incorporate every limitation thereof. Therefore, claims 2-4 and 6 also are patentable over Jitsukata by virtue of their dependencies from claim 1.

Claims 12-14, like claim 1, include features related to preparing guidance to guide a follower vehicle, wherein the guidance includes a photographed image of a view ahead of the leader vehicle and information of the state change overlaid on the photographed image. Therefore, claims 12-14 are patentable over Jitsukata for at least the same reasons as for claim 1, as well as based on their own merits. Favorable reconsideration of claims 12-14 is respectfully requested.

The Obviousness Rejection of Claims 5 and 7 Is Overcome

Claim 5 and 7 were rejected as being unpatentable over Jitsukata in view of Taguchi.

The obviousness rejection is respectfully traversed because Jitsukata and Taguchi cannot support a prima facie case of obviousness.

Claims 5 and 7 depend on claim 1 and incorporate every limitation thereof. As discussed earlier, Jitsukata fails to disclose every feature of claim 1. The other cited document, Taguchi, does not alleviate the deficiencies of Jitsukata.

Taguchi relates to an automatic driving system that allows a follower vehicle to follow a leader vehicle based on near-infrared signals emitted by the leader vehicle. Like Jitsukata, Taguchi's system is used to automate the driving of a vehicle. Images collected by the system are used to the machine to perform automatic driving, not to assist the driver in driving the follower vehicle. Furthermore, Taguchi is silent on the feature of overlaying information of a state change of the leader vehicle on a photographed image showing a view in front of the leader vehicle, as described in claim 1. Accordingly, Jitsukata and Taguchi, even if combined, do not disclose every limitation of claim 1. Therefore, claims 5 and 7 are patentable over the combination of Jitsukata and Taguchi at least by virtue of their dependencies from claim 1. Favorable reconsideration of claims 5 and 7 is respectfully requested.

The Obviousness Rejection of Claims 10 and 16 Is Overcome

Claims 10 and 16 were rejected as being unpatentable over Jitsukata in view of Barrett. It is respectfully submitted that the obviousness rejection of claims 10 and 16 is overcome because Jitsukata can Barrett cannot support a prima facie case of obviousness.

Claims 10 and 16, like claim 1, includes features related to generating guidance including a photographed image of a view ahead of a leader vehicle and information of a state change of the leader vehicle overlaid on the photographed image. As discussed relative to claim 1, Jitsukata does not disclose these features. Barrett, the other document cited in the Office Action, was relied on for its purported discussion of a history detector for detecting a running history of

the follower vehicle. However, similar to Jitsukata, Barrett fails to disclose features related to generating guidance including a photographed image of a view ahead of a leader vehicle and overlaying information of a state change of the leader vehicle on the photographed image. Accordingly, Jitsukata and Barrett, even if combined, do not disclose every limitation of claims 10 and 16, and hence cannot support a prima facie case of obviousness. The obviousness rejection is untenable and should be withdrawn. Favorable reconsideration of claims 10 and 16 is respectfully requested.

The Obviousness Rejection of Claim 11 Is Overcome

Claim 11 depends on claim 10 and incorporates every limitation thereof. As discussed earlier, Jitsukata, Taguchi and Barrett, either combined or alone, do not disclose features related to generating guidance including a photographed image of a view ahead of a leader vehicle and overlaying information of a state change of the leader vehicle on the photographed image, as described in claim 10. Accordingly, claim 11 is patentable over the combination of Jitsukata, Taguchi and Barrett. Favorable reconsideration of claim 10 is respectfully requested.

New Claims 17-20 Are Patentable

New claims 17-20 depend on claims 1 and 12-14, respectively, and incorporate every limitation thereof. As discussed earlier, claims 1 and 12-14 are patentable over the documents of record. Accordingly, claims 17-20 also are patentable by virtue of their respective dependencies. Favorable consideration of claims 17-20 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSIONS

For the reasons given above, Applicants believe that this application is in condition for allowance, and request that the Examiner give the application favorable reconsideration and permit it to issue as a patent. If the Examiner believes that the application can be put in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representatives listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to **Deposit Account 500417** and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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